

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-01 EA-01 ISO-00 /005 R

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APPROVED BY: S/N: HRWELLMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENTIANE 3666 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
08 MAY 74

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 3666

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, LA

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON
NARCOTICS

REF: VIENTIANE 3665 (NOTAL)

1. DURING COURTESY CALL REPORTED REFTEL, AMBASSADOR
RAISED WITH KHAMKING SOUVANLASY, NEW MINISTER OF JUSTICE,
QUESTION OF LACK OF ACTUAL TRIALS AND SENTENCES IN
NARCOTICS CASES. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD RECENTLY
CONGRATULATED MINISTER OF INTERIOR, PHENG PHONGSAVAN,
ON NUMBER OF ARRESTS ON VARIOUS DRUG CHARGES, BUT HAD
EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE THAT NOT ONE MAJOR TRAFFICKER
HAD YET BEEN TRIED AND ACTUALLY SENTENCED. THIS
SITUATION CREATED AN UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION AND
AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT AID LEGISLATION REQUIRED A
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FINDING THAT AID RECIPIENTS WERE DOING ALL IN THEIR

POWER TO FULFILL INTERNATIONAL TREATIES ON DRUG ENFORCEMENT.

2. KHAMKING ANSWERED VOLUBLY AND AT LENGTH. PRIME MINISTER HAD FROM VERY INCEPTION OF NARCOTICS LAW (1971) INSTRUCTED HIM AS FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE TO ENFORCE IT AND FOLLOW ITS IMPLEMENTATION CLOSELY. KHAMKING HAD INSTRUCTED HIS PEOPLE IN PROVINCES TO SEND HIM A REPORT AS SOON AS ANY DRUG CASE DEVELOPED. HE AFFIRMED THAT LAW WAS BEING IMPLEMENTED WITH VIGOR; THERE HAD BEEN 240 ARRESTS. BIG PROBLEM WAS POLITICAL. MEO DEPUTIES PREVAILED ON PM TO RELEASE ON OWN RECONNAISSANCE MEOS ARRESTED ON DRUG CHARGES. IT WAS DIFFICULT SITUATION; MANY MEOS HAD TRADITIONALL FORMED HABIT OF SMOKING OPIUM WITHOUT HINDRANCE. HE HIMSELF HAD SOME SYMPATHY FOR THESE CASES. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT PRISONERS WHO WERE RELEASED DISAPPEARED, OFTEN BECAUSE IT WAS DIFFICULT TO LOCATE THEM.

3. KHAMKING NOTED THAT THE CRIMINAL COURTS WHICH HAVE JURISDICTION OVER DRUG CASES WERE MEETING NOW AND SEVERAL SUCH CASES WERE PENDING.
WHITEHOUSE UNQTE RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, DRUG CONTROL, PENAL SYSTEM, LAW, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE096162
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/NM: HRWELLMAN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740114-0398
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740560/aaaacbpt.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SNM
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: VIENTIANE 3665 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUN 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <10 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON NARCOTICS
TAGS: SNAR, LA
To: GENEVA HONG KONG
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005